



Maine Lighthouses – Documentation of Their Past

By Candace and Mary Clifford

It's always welcome news to learn that Candace Clifford and her mother, Mary Louise, have produced another book on our country's lighthouses. In 1993 they produced *Women Who Kept the Lights* and in 2000, *Nineteenth Century Lights*, both excellent efforts.

Now, hot off the press, is a most thoroughly researched tome on Maine lighthouses. Would even ten percent of books on American lighthouses be as comprehensive as this volume it would be a service to historians and others interested in the subject. Although the book is comprehensive and well researched, one of the highlights is the wonderful historic photos (many never before published). As the authors say in the forward, "Historic photographs provide details that written records cannot. The first photographic survey of lighthouses was undertaken by an employee of the Lighthouse Board around 1859. Many of these images show keepers living a spartan existence in rough rural settings . . ." These images, of which our Society holds several, were taken with keepers, their families and other people posed around the station: on the lantern deck, next to the tower and dwellings. Perhaps this was done to show scale. The photos are recognized as they have a cropped, curved top.

Part 1 details the early lighthouse administration, and while this has been published before in numerous articles and books, it is a tight and accurate discussion of this aspect of

our lighthouse history. The chapter brings light to the early Maine light stations in a chronological manner. Other parts, or chapters, discuss offshore light stations and the difficulty of constructing them, our lighthouses under the Lighthouse Board which took charge in 1852, lighthouse life, and lighthouses under the Bureau of Lighthouses (1911 – 1939).

The thoroughness of the research is evidenced by the extensive end notes at the back of each section. Scattered throughout the text are wonderful quotes from government employees as well as the keepers. At the end of the book is an appendix which has a short blurb on each Maine light station describing the location, year constructed and present status (a valuable list of information all by itself). The book is concluded by an extensive bibliography.

If I were to pick only ten contemporary books on American lighthouses this would be one of them. The photos alone are worth the price and the tight, rich text really illuminates lighthouse life on Maine's light stations.

Long Island's Lighthouses – Past and Present

By Bob Muller

Article by Bill Bleyer, staff writer, *Newsday*, Long Island, NY.

Robert Muller spent his early summers at a Long Island cottage on Sexton Island, fishing near the Fire Island Lighthouse. And he always loved history. But it was only seven years ago that the 40-year-old Islip Terrace resident began to get interested in the history of lighthouses. That interest, which led him to create the first website devoted to local beacons, has now yielded the first book to detail all of the lighthouses that have ever been erected around or off the 1,100 miles of Long Island coastline.

Long Island's Lighthouses Past and Present, a paperback that runs almost 400 pages, debuted officially in the spring of 2004 on Suffolk



The Maine Lighthouse book is filled with photos like this of Grindle Point, circa 1858. Note the personnel placed around the station for scale. National Archives photo.

The book is soft cover, 220 pages, 156 illustrations, and retails for \$22.95. Buy it directly from the authors for \$21.79 (\$19.95 plus \$1.84 media mail postage). Make your check out to "Cypress Communications" and mail it to 35 E. Rosemont Ave., Alexandria, VA 22301. For more information, contact Candace Clifford at jclifford@earthlink.net or visit <http://users.sitestar.net/~cypress>.

County Lighthouse Day at Cedar Point County Park in East Hampton.

While several books have previously chronicled Long Island lighthouses, none included all of the structures, including those that have been lost over the decades, such as the Shinnecock Bay and Gardiners Island lighthouses.

Wayne Wheeler, President of the US Lighthouse Society, says, "What an outstanding job

you did with your book, it's far more comprehensive than I thought it would be. I thought you were just going to do a thin picture book with some 'facts.' This is a major work and appears interesting and well researched, something that very few [lighthouse] books can claim."

"Having a book with all the Long Island lighthouses is a good thing," said Gayle Haines, former president of the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society and now a board member of the new National Lighthouse Museum being constructed on Staten Island. "He should do well with it."

Muller, who is the founding president of the Long Island chapter of the U.S. Lighthouse Society, president of the East Islip Historical Society and a National Park Service volunteer at the Fire Island Lighthouse, is trying to be philanthropic with the book. He said the proceeds from the sale of the \$25 volume will go to the lighthouse society for preservation projects. It is for sale at lighthouses and other area historic sites and on the group's Web site: LILighthouseSociety.org.

"What gave me the idea for the book was that I was down in Florida in 1998 and saw some collectible lighthouses – Montauk, Fire Island – in a collectibles store," said Muller, who renovates kitchens and bathrooms to support his lighthouse avocation. "When I got back to Long Island, I wanted to get a book on Long Island lighthouses because I like to read. And there was no book on Long Island lighthouses, so I decided it would be a good first book project because I had been freelance writing for more than five years."

As he began to do his research, he said, "I was surprised how many lighthouses there were, how much history there was and I was stunned that, being a fourth-generation Long Islander, I didn't know anything about all of this. So I started a website in 1999 just to share some of what we had been finding." The result was LongIslandLighthouses.com.

The book covers 24 light stations from Coney Island in Brooklyn to Montauk Point. He also includes lightships that were stationed off Long Island – something that very few people know ever happened.

It even details minor aids to navigation such as the metal skeleton light structures on breakwaters at Glen Cove, Port Jefferson and other harbors.

To further educate people about the beacons, he includes a history of lighthouse construction in America and breaks down the lighthouses on Long Island by the types of construction. There's also a list of lighthouse historical groups, a reading list and a glossary.

Muller said the loss of the Shinnecock Bay light station, which was demolished in 1948 and is pictured on the cover, was the biggest tragedy for historic preservation of maritime architecture on Long Island. "Putting it on the cover reminds us not to let it happen again," he said.

Muller found himself captivated by the stories of the lighthouse keepers and their heroism during rescues.

He also was impressed by the story of the construction of the Race Rock Lighthouse off Fishers Island, which was lit in 1878. "It took almost nine years to build" because of

the strong currents and bad weather. "It was one of the hardest lighthouses to build in the United States."

Although Muller has decided not to profit from sales of the book, he did benefit from the project in another way. Diane Mancini, who helped with the research and edited the manuscript, is now his fiancée.

The volume is 384 pages long and contains over 150 images. It is available at many Long Island Lighthouse gift shops, as well as selected businesses. Or one can order a copy from Long Island Chapter, U.S. Lighthouse Society, P.O. Box 744, Patchogue, New York 11772. Make the check payable to LI Chapter, USLHS. Cost is \$25 plus \$5 shipping/handling.

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